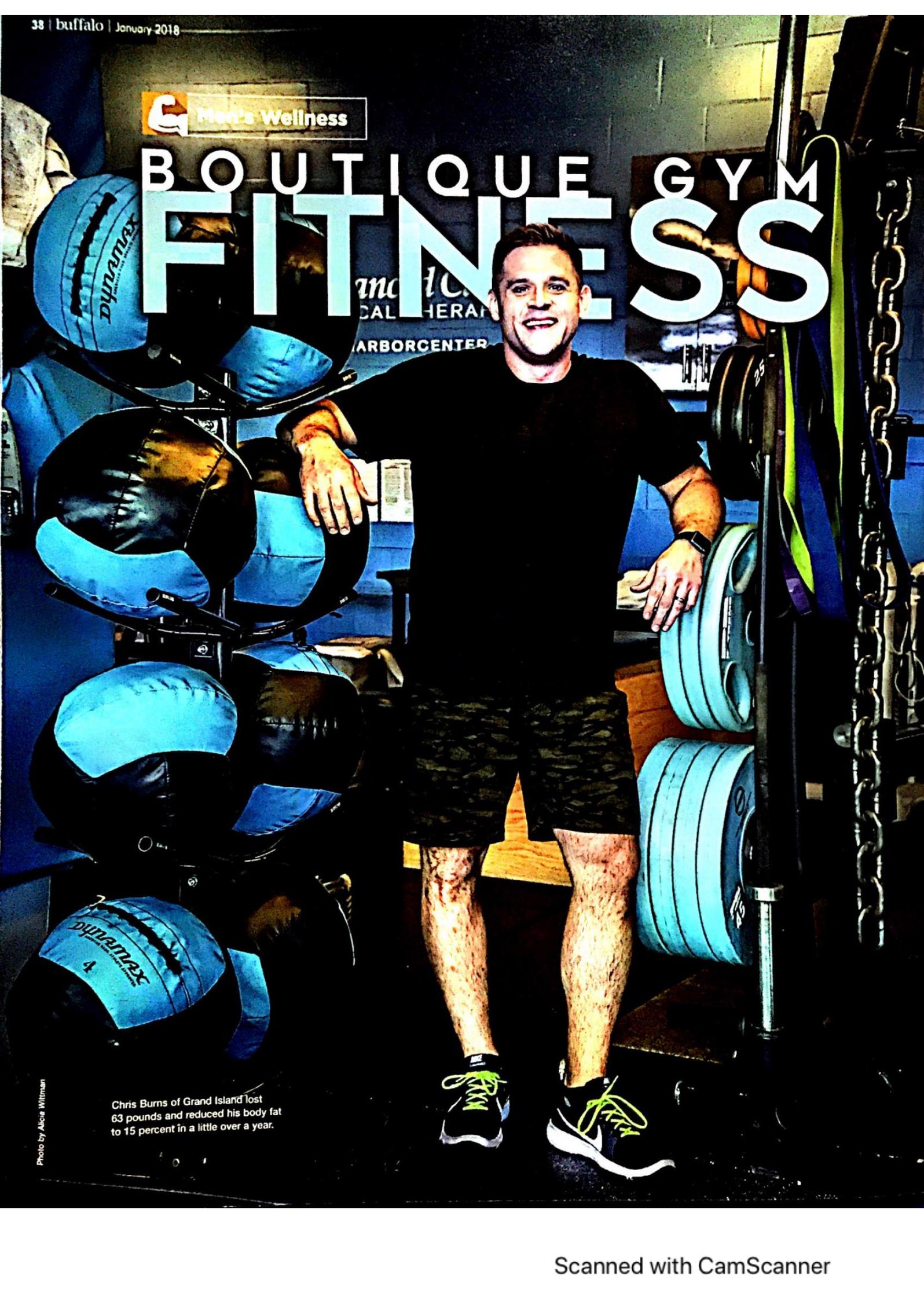


 Men's Wellness

BOULIQUE GYM FITNESS



Chris Burns of Grand Island lost 63 pounds and reduced his body fat to 15 percent in a little over a year.

Photo by Alicia Wittman



Photo by Alicia Wittman

Jason Jerome heads Impact Sports, a smaller gym downtown where training is customized for each client.

BY LAURIE KAISER

When Chris Burns first entered Impact Sports Performance in the HarborCenter, he felt overweight, exhausted, and overwhelmed. With a demanding job in the state court system and twin toddlers at home, the Grand Island resident hadn't made exercise a priority in a long time.

"I wanted to find a place where I could train my then 38-year-old body. I wasn't looking for a specific number on the scale. I just wanted to get healthy again," said Burns, a former high school athlete who played club sports through college and into his 20s. "A friend recommended the adult class Impact offers and it seemed like a perfect fit."

Fifteen months after taking his first intensive exercise class, Burns had lost 63 pounds. Along the way, he placed in two Impact-sponsored competitions in his age bracket, including the Spring Leaning Challenge, where he reduced his body fat to 15 percent.

"I exceeded my goals, and I'm the best shape of my life," he said. "I feel like my body and mind have both woken up."

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— Jason Jerome,
Impact Sports Performance

In the land of long winters that is Buffalo, finding an indoor fitness regimen can be the answer to a sustainable exercise plan. But rather than just plodding along on a treadmill or bench-pressing weights alone, training centers like Impact and a handful of others in Western New York provide guided exercise from staff members who often hold college degrees in disciplines like sports medicine and health and wellness.

These facilities are smaller and have higher fees than traditional big-box gyms, but they also offer more specialized attention and often include nutritional counseling. Members decide how frequently to work with a coach, as they are called, and how often to exercise alone or with a group.

"The common denominator among our clients is that everyone comes here with a goal," said Impact Athletic Director Jason Jerome. "Maybe it's weight management; maybe it's body composition. I ask each member: What is your goal? What is your timeline? How many people do you want to work out with? From there we make a plan."

Continued on next page

Boutique Gym Fitness, continued from page 39

Burns found an adult fitness class at 7 a.m. that he could regularly fit into his work day. Impact also offers classes for adults at noon and 6 p.m., convenient for downtown professionals. In the classes, the participants focus on mobility, endurance, and strength-building exercises using a self-powered treadmill called Curve, and Wattbikes, which measure energy output in watts... among other exercises and other futuristic-looking equipment.

Chris Heeb, a former YMCA fitness director who opened Crossfit Nickel City in 2014, offers his members a combination of weight-training, cardio with rowing machines, bikes and jump ropes, and flexibility and mobility-training exercises to ensure members get results.

"Mix these elements in as many combinations and patterns as creativity will allow," he said. "Routine is the enemy."

Members also can take a weekly gymnastics class that includes pullups, rope-climbing, pushups, handstands, pirouettes, flips and splits.

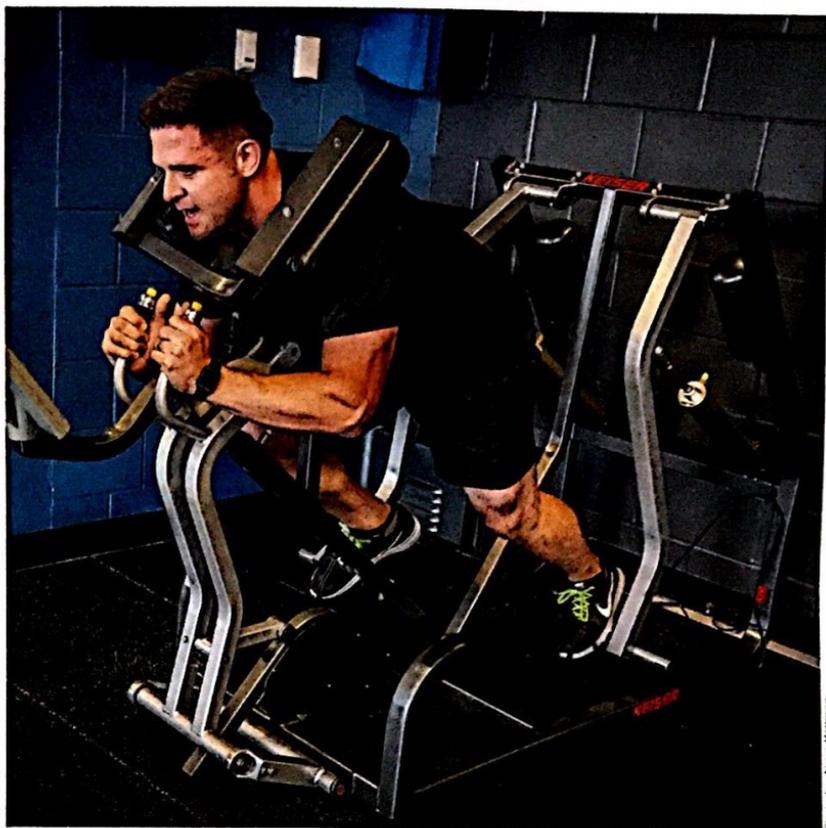
"We actually get more men than women some weeks," Heeb said. "We try to give everyone all the tools they'll need to take care of their body for life, not just to get in shape for the summer or some special event."

Bob Bateson, who opened Body Blocks Fitness in 1988, also wants to help his members discover a long-term healthier lifestyle, even if they begin with short-term goals.

"People feel intimidated when they hear that they have to work out an hour a day, three to four days a week," Bateson said. "We meet people where they're at and then start them on the program. Give me half an hour a week to get you started, and if you're committed, I can change your life."

For optimum results, he touts his "Bob's Big 3": pressing motions (for the chest), pulling motions (for the back muscles) and squatting motions (working quads, hamstrings and glutes).

"You can use your own body weight, use bands or conventional weights. We have to build a foundation of strength first before adding compound movements — a squat with curl or a squat with row."



Chris Burns, father to two sets of young twins, said getting in shape has given him the energy to be a better parent.

Contrary to popular belief, he said, hopping on a cardio machine for an hour isn't the quickest way to get results.

"Resistance training in a work zone burns three times more calories than cardio alone," Bateson said.

Body Blocks' popular Ride and Glide class puts this theory into practice, combining a cardio component with resistance from a gravity machine.

Heeb said he and his staff at Crossfit Nickel City teach their members movements they might not have done before.

"You want to learn exercises that are going to take you through life — ones that enable you to take shingles off your house or play with your kids on the floor."

This last goal is what spurred Chris Burns to begin his new fitness journey. And it's a good thing. Last year, he wife gave birth to a second set of twins.

"There's nothing like being active with my kids," he said. "Now, when I get home from work, I have the energy to do it." ■

Body Blocks

496 Pearl St., Buffalo
847.2639

Cost: Training sessions range from \$36 to \$60 each depending upon the package. A gym membership alone is \$50 to \$75 per month.

For training members who also want full access to the gym, the fee is an additional \$20 per month.

Crossfit Nickel City

247 Virginia St., Buffalo
392-8818

Cost: Class 10 Pack: \$145.
Unlimited Monthly: \$145.
One year paid in full: \$1,556.
Six months paid in full: \$826.50.

Impact Sports Performance

HarborCenter
100 Washington St., Buffalo
855-4585

Costs ranges from \$129 to \$899 per month, depending on frequency. Average: \$349.